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Polish spies in US prey on high-tech military secrets

They're armed with KGB-supplied
'shopping lists' — and plenty of cash

First of three articles on Polish espionage in the United States.

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It is called Sluzba Bezpieczenstwa.

And the fact that most Americans don't know what it is — let alone how to pronounce it — goes a long way in explaining why the Polish intelligence organization, SB, has been so successful in obtaining sensitive details of this country's most secret defense systems.

It is said to rank second only to the Soviet KGB in terms of spying activity in the United States. And — like the KGB, with which the SB is linked — the primary target is technology, particularly US military technology.

"Polish intelligence is actively targeting US classified information and technology. The threat is serious in this country," says Phillip A. Parker, deputy assistant director of the FBI's Intelligence Division.

The SB's record speaks for itself. According to two spy cases involving Poland which have been made public in recent years, the organization has acquired:

- Volumes of classified information on American efforts to design a system that would enable US Minuteman nuclear missiles to survive a preemptive nuclear attack by the Soviet Union.
- Plans for the "quiet" radar system for the B-1 and Stealth bombers.
- Details of the "look-down, shoot-down" radar system for F-15 fighters.
- An all-weather radar system for US tanks.
- Information on the Phoenix air-to-air missile used on Navy F-14 fighters.
- Documents on the Patriot surface-to-air missile.

● Details of the improved Hawk surface-to-air missile.

The method used by the SB to obtain these military secrets was a simple one: They bought them for cash from American citizens, often at bargain-basement prices.

The Minuteman missile documents cited above were sold to Polish agents in 1980 and '81 by an American engineer who received \$250,000, according to the FBI. The documents were considered so important in Poland and the Soviet Union that the Polish agents received two commendations for their efforts, one of them signed by the man who was then chief of the KGB, Yuri Andropov.

The American engineer who reportedly sold the documents, James D. Harper Jr., was indicted in early December by a San Francisco grand jury on six counts of espionage and three counts of tax evasion. He denies the charges.

All the other documents cited above were sold to Polish agents between 1978 and '81 by an American engineer at Hughes Aircraft Company. The engineer, William H. Bell, received payments of \$110,000, according to the FBI.

Mr. Bell is serving an eight-year prison sentence in California. Marian Zacharski, the man who recruited Bell for the Polish intelligence service, was sentenced to life in prison for his part in the espionage scheme.

Though the Bell case went to trial in 1981 and the Harper case is not expected to go to trial until midyear, both Harper's and Bell's involvement with Polish agents took place during roughly the same period of time in the late 1970s.

The two cases offer a rare glimpse into the workings of the Polish intelligence organization and the murky world of Soviet-bloc espionage in the US.

According to an FBI affidavit filed in the Harper case, the Polish intelligence organization is divided into units or "wydzialy," each with an individual KGB liaison officer.

The affidavit says that each year,

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